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THE NORTH SIDE OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL
BEFORE THE PRESENT ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE WAS BUILT

TALES OF ENGLISH MINSTERS

CANTERBURY

BY

ELIZABETH GRIERSON

AUTHOR OF
"THE CHILDREN'S BOOK OF EDINBURGH," "CHILDREN'S TALES FROM SCOTTISH BALLADS," ETC.

WITH
THREE ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR
AND FOUR IN BLACK AND WHITE

NEW YORK PUBLIC

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CANTERBURY

'Like a mighty army
Moves the Church of God;
Brothers, we are treading
Where the Saints have trod.'

I

When we come to visit Canterbury Cathedral, we find that there is so much to talk about that it seems as if the stories connected with it would fill a book of themselves. It is the most interesting of all our Cathedrals, although I think that Winchester follows hard on its heels; and in one way it is unique, for, as you know, it is the Mother-Cathedral of the great Church of England, for the Archbishop of Canterbury ranks first among all Anglican Bishops, whether at home or in our Colonies; and when difficulties arise in the Church, —not only in England, but in those far-off lands, which cannot be settled by the Bishops and clergy living there—it is to the Archbishop of Canterbury that they look for advice and aid.

Now, perhaps you wonder why I have said the 'Mother-Cathedral,' and not the 'Mother-Church,' which is not such a clumsy expression, and seems to mean the same thing.

Ah! but I have a reason for doing this, for when we go down among the green Kentish hop-fields, and enter the quaint little city, lying among its pleasant meadows, it is not the Cathedral standing in the middle of the town which I want you to visit first, but a tiny little red-roofed church, with a square, ivy-covered tower, which stands in a churchyard, which in summer is fragrant with the perfume of roses, on a hillside, just outside the town.

This church is called 'St. Martin's,' and, tiny as it is, it can claim the proud title of the 'Mother-Church of England.'

For, as far as we know, it is the very oldest church in the country. And we can touch the walls — part of them built, like the tower of St. Albans Cathedral, of Roman bricks—which are standing to-day very much as they stood thirteen hundred years ago, when a Christian Queen worshipped here, when all her subjects, and even her own husband, were pagans.

'But how did a Christian Queen come to be living in a heathen country?' you ask.

I will tell you.

As you all know, the Romans, under Julius Cæsar, invaded and conquered Britain about fifty years before the birth of our Lord. They settled down and colonized our country, which they held for over four hundred years.

And, curious to say, although they were heathens themselves, and bitterly opposed to the spread of Christianity, it was through them that the way was opened up for the Faith of Christ to be planted in our land.

For they traded with France, or Gaul, as it was then called, where in the second century there were already Christian churches, and the people of Gaul were not slow to send missionaries across the Channel to the island from which they were beginning to obtain large quantities of wheat. And, in spite of persecution from the Roman Emperors, the Faith spread in England, and a few churches were built here and there in the more important towns.

Now, there was a colony of Romans settled at Canterbury, or, as it was called in those days,

'Durovernum,' just as there were colonies of Romans settled at York, Lincoln, Verulam, and other places we have read of. And there must have been some Christians living among them—perhaps some of the Roman soldiers themselves believed the Christian Faith—and they built a little church here on the hillside, and dedicated it to St. Martin.

St. Martin was a French Bishop, the Bishop of Tours, and I am going to tell you his story, partly because some people think that it was he who took an interest in the Christians at Canterbury, and perhaps came over from Gaul to found this little church ; and partly because his story is such a beautiful one that I am sure you would like me to tell it to you, even if the Saint had nothing to do with Canterbury at all.

Now, although St. Martin was a French Bishop, he was not a Frenchman. He was the son of a Roman magistrate, and he was born in Hungary about A.D. 360.

When he was a boy he heard the story of our Lord's life and death, and he made up his mind that he would be one of His followers. His parents were pagans, however, and they did not

THE MURDER OF THOMAS A BECKET,
IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL. PAGE 63.

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want him to become a Christian, so they made him a soldier, hoping that the excitement of a soldier's life would drive his new ideas out of his head.

And their plan was partly successful, for although Martin, as he moved about Gaul with his regiment, still kept the old resolve before him, and went to church sometimes, and even put down his name as a 'catechumen'—that is, as one who desired to be instructed in the Christian Faith, and to be baptized—he never came to the point, as we say, but just let time slip on, meaning some day, when he had more leisure, to present himself for baptism, and thus publicly declare himself a Christian.

The years passed, however, and Martin grew to be a full-grown man, but, although he was good and kind, he had never been baptized.

Now, it chanced that one winter his regiment was stationed at Amiens, and on a bitterly cold night he was walking near the city gate (perhaps he was the officer on duty, and was visiting the guard), when he saw a miserable beggar, with hardly any clothes on, crouching by the wall, almost perished with cold.

In those days no one heeded beggars, and it would have been the most natural thing for a

soldier in Martin's position to walk on, and leave the poor man to die.

But the young officer had learned what Christ had taught about showing mercy, and he took his thick, warm cloak from his shoulders and cut it in two with his sword, and gave half of it to the beggar, to protect him from the cold.

The next night, so the story runs, as Martin the soldier lay sleeping in his chamber, he had a wonderful vision.

The gates of Heaven were opened, and he saw our Lord on a throne, surrounded by a host of Saints and Angels, and, to his astonishment, in the midst of all the glory and brightness, He was wearing the half of a soldier's cloak. Martin recognized it as his, and while he was gazing at the scene in breathless awe, it seemed to him that Christ pointed to the cloak and said softly: 'Behold the mantle given to me by Martin, yet but a catechumen.'

The vision faded, but the words sank into the young man's heart. If his Master could so confess him in Heaven for doing such a little act of mercy, he determined to be brave enough to confess Him on earth, and, without delay, he made public profession of his faith, and was baptized.

And, more than this, he left the army, and went into a monastery and became a monk. Afterwards he was made Bishop of Tours, and we read that, until he died, he fought as bravely with his tongue and with his pen against errors and abuses in the Church, as he had fought with his sword when he was a soldier.

But now we must leave him and come back to the little church on the Kentish hillside which is called by his name.

It must have fallen more or less into ruins, or, at least, it must have stood empty and deserted for a century or two after the Romans were recalled to Rome, and the heathen Anglo-Saxons overran England.

Then what happened at one or two other places happened here. As the country grew more settled a new town arose with a new name. Durovernum became 'Canterbury'—the Burgh of the Men of Kent; the Capital of their Kingdom. Now, as you know, by looking at any old map, the Angles settled on the east coast of England, taking possession of the land from the Firth of Forth to the south of Lincolnshire. The Saxons took possession of most of the middle and the south

of England, and the Jutes, under their leaders, Hengist and Horsa, took up their abode in Kent.

And it chanced that in the sixth century a great King arose in Kent called Ethelbert, who conquered a large part of the country of the Angles and Saxons, and became their Overlord.

He was a pagan, fierce, strong, and warlike, who worshipped Thor and Woden, the heathen gods of the North. But he went on a visit to Gaul, and there he fell in love with a Frankish Princess named Bertha, daughter of King Charibert of Paris.

He loved her so much that he made up his mind at once that no other maiden should be his wife, and he went and asked her father if he would allow him to marry her.

Now, as we know, Ethelbert was a very powerful Monarch, and I expect he thought that King Charibert would be glad to let his daughter become his wife; but, to his astonishment, the French King hesitated.

He and all his family were Christians, and he knew that the Kentish King was a pagan, and, although he wanted to be on friendly terms with him, it did not seem right to allow his young daughter to go alone into a heathen country.

So he made one condition. If King Ethelbert would allow a Christian priest to accompany the Princess, and would promise that she would be free to practise the rites of her own religion in her new home, he could marry her, but not unless.

The fierce heathen King agreed to this arrangement readily. He was so accustomed to people worshipping different gods that he did not mind much what god Princess Bertha believed in, so long as she was willing to be his wife; and, when he was discussing the matter, he suddenly remembered the little Christian church up on the hillside, overlooking his Capital, and he promised that henceforth it should belong to the Princess and her chaplain, and that they might have Service in it every day if they liked.

King Charibert was satisfied, so the marriage took place, and Queen Bertha went away with her husband to his own country, taking with her a good Bishop named Luidhard to be her friend and adviser.

Her story is something like the story of St. Margaret of Scotland. For, as you will one day read, St. Margaret was also a royal Princess who went into a strange country, and was married

to a fierce, warlike husband, King Malcolm Canmore, who, although he was not a heathen like King Ethelbert, was only a Christian in name, until the brave example of his gentle wife made him think of religion as he had never thought of it before.

It must have been very lonely for Queen Bertha at first. Her husband's Palace stood in the centre of the little burgh, which was surrounded, as were all towns in these days, by a high wall, so as to be guarded against any sudden attack from any enemy.

These walls were pierced by gates, which were always well guarded, and we can imagine that it must have been a trial to the young Queen to pass out, as we read she did every morning, through the groups of curious soldiers, who perhaps dropped scoffing words about her religion as she went through their midst to her little church, to join with her faithful friend Luidhard, and any other Christians she could gather together, in the Worship of God.

But she did it, and she must have done it in such a wise and tactful way that her husband, watching to see what sort of religion hers was, came to respect it, and to wish to hear more about it.

So Queen Bertha, little as she thought it, was

really acting as a missionary in those difficult years of her early married life, and by-and-by, as you will hear, she had her reward.

Now we will leave her at Canterbury for a time, and turn our thoughts to a scene that took place in Rome some four years before she came to England.

There was, at that time, a slave-market in Rome, and one day a young Roman deacon of noble birth was walking through it. His name was Gregory.

As he was looking with pitying eyes at the groups of slaves standing chained together in the hot sunshine, his attention was arrested by some young boys with white skins, and golden hair, who had evidently been brought from some far-distant country, for no slaves with faces like this had ever been seen in Rome before.

Gregory paused for a moment. He felt that he would like to know where the strangers came from, for their golden hair and sweet, pale faces reminded him of what he had read about the Saints in Heaven.

'From what country do they come?' he asked at last, turning to the slave-dealer who had charge of the group.

'They are English, Angles,' said the man,

wondering if the young deacon wanted to buy one of them.

'They should not be called Angles, but angels, with faces so angel-like,' said Gregory sadly, his mind still full of thoughts of Heaven.

'They come from a Kingdom called Deira,' went on the merchant, hoping he had found a purchaser.

'De ire,' answered the young man, who was not thinking of buying slaves at all, but of how it might be possible to teach these children with the angel faces about God—'ay, plucked from God's ire, and called to Christ's mercy.'

'And what is the name of their King?' he asked, hoping, perhaps, to hear that the King of the Angles was a Christian.

'Ælla,' was the reply.

Now, in these days people were always on the lookout for good omens, and as Ælla sounded like the beginning of the Alleluia which Gregory was wont to sing in church, he instantly took this for a good omen.

'Some day Alleluia will be sung in Ælla's land,' he said hopefully, and passed on out of the market, wondering more than ever how it would be possible to send missionaries to England.

'If the Pope will give me leave, I will go thither myself,' he said; and he went to the Pope, and begged him to allow him to gather together a few other monks who would be willing to share the danger with him, and go with him as missionaries to England.

The Pope would have granted his request, but the people of Rome would not hear of it, for Gregory was so much respected that they wanted to keep him among them, and the Pope listened to them, and greatly to the young deacon's disappointment, bade him stay at home.

But in a wonderfully short time Gregory became Pope himself, and had the power to send men wherever he liked.

And although he had a great deal to think about in his new position, he never forgot the fair-haired boys he had seen in the market-place, and was always on the lookout for a suitable time to send men to preach the Gospel to their nation.

At last it came; for news was brought to him that the Christian Princess Bertha had married the heathen King of Kent, and that he had allowed her to take a Christian priest to her new home, and to practise her own religion.

'If his wife is a Christian, he cannot refuse admittance to my monks,' thought good Pope Gregory; and straightway he sent for a very brave and holy man named Augustine, and asked him if he would go, at the head of a small company of monks, and preach the Gospel to the English nation.

Augustine said he would, and shortly afterwards he set out, at the head of a little band of followers, for England.

They had not gone very far, however, when their hearts failed them, and they sent their leader back to Rome to beg the Pope to allow them to return.

Perhaps some of you are inclined to say 'Cowards!' when you read this, but just think for a moment of what these men were asked to do.

There were neither post-offices, nor telegrams, nor trains, in those days, and they were asked to set out from Rome, and go, probably on foot, right across the Continent of Europe to a strange land, whose inhabitants they had heard spoken of as 'barbarous, fierce, and unbelieving,' and of whose language they did not know a word.

It was really very much as if we had asked one of our friends to-day to set out and walk right

across the Continent of Africa, and visit some savage King on the other side, who would probably murder him as soon as he set foot in his country.

But Pope Gregory was made of the stuff that martyrs are made of, and he would not allow the monks to return. He sent Augustine back to them with a letter, which we can read to-day, if we will, telling them that, having begun a good work, they must not think of giving it up, and praying to God to grant that, although he might not see them again on earth, he might be permitted to see 'the fruits of their labours' in Heaven. 'For,' added the good Pope, thinking of the earnest desire which he himself had had to go to England, 'though I cannot labour with you, I shall partake in the joy of the reward, because I am willing to labour.'

Do you remember the parable in the Bible about the Kingdom of Heaven being like a grain of mustard-seed, the least of all the seeds, and yet how, when it springs up, it grows into a mighty tree?

I think that if Pope Gregory had been able, when he planted his grain of mustard-seed, and sent away his handful of half-frightened, half-

reluctant monks, to look forward eighteen hundred years and see into what an enormous and far-spreading tree English Christianity would grow, he would have been content.

At last, after weary travel, the little band of missionaries arrived in England. They landed at Ebbsfleet, in the Isle of Thanet, which, as you know, is the north-east corner of Kent.

Augustine was a wise and prudent man, and, instead of beginning to preach to the people at once, he sent a courteous message to the King at Canterbury that some 'strangers from Rome' had arrived, and would fain have an audience with him, for he knew that he would have much more chance to succeed in his mission if the King took him and his companions under his protection.

Now it seems that King Ethelbert must have watched Queen Bertha, and become interested in the religion she professed, for he said at once that he would meet the strangers, and hear what they had to say.

But because he believed in witchcraft, and was very much afraid that they might have the power to bewitch him, he would not meet them in any house, where he thought spirits had more power,

but went right out into the open country, to a wide chalk down, and there he gave audience to the little band of foreigners.

St. Augustine could not speak to him in his own language; but he could speak the language of the people of Gaul, and he had taken the precaution to bring an interpreter over from Gaul with him.

So he stood there before the King, who was seated in rude state on the green turf, and explained the Christian Faith to him, and the Frankish interpreter at his side translated his words as he went on.

When he had finished, the King spoke, telling him that his words seemed 'fair,' but that they were 'new' and 'strange,' and that he could not give up the gods of his fathers for them, but that he was willing to shelter and protect him and his monks, and to allow them to preach in his Kingdom.

Then he went back to Canterbury, and in a very short time he sent an invitation to the strangers to come to his Capital.

And so it was that Christianity came back to England—to the middle and south of it, at least, for, as you may know, it was brought to Scotland

and Northumbria about the same time by St. Columba and his followers, who came from Ireland, where the Faith of Christ still held sway, not having been destroyed by the Jutes, and Angles, and Saxons, as it had been in Britain.

If we could have stood at the side of St. Martin's Church on the day when St. Augustine and his monks entered the 'Burgh of the Men of Kent,' we should have seen a strange sight. Indeed, it has been described so accurately to us by the Venerable Bede that we can almost picture it to ourselves.

We can imagine how the news must have spread in the little city that the strangers from Rome, to talk to whom the King himself had gone to the Isle of Thanet, were coming to live among them, and explain to them, if they would listen, their Queen's religion. And we can fancy how they would throng up this hilly road that passes the church, for they knew that this was the way the strangers would come, and perhaps they would stop, and crowd together just by the church, for I think Queen Bertha would be there with Bishop Luidhard, ready to welcome her fellow-Christians, and to pray for the success of their mission.

And by-and-by the faint sound of singing would

be heard, and a strange little procession would come over the crest of the hill. First came two monks, one carrying, high in the air, a silver cross, and the other a board, on which was rudely traced the crucified figure of our Lord.

Then came the rest of the monks, in their dark and travel-stained gowns, with their leader, St. Augustine, in their midst.

They were chanting a litany as they walked. One moment, thinking of the heathen darkness that lay over the fair land into which they had come, they were praying that 'God would turn away His wrath' from the city, and the next, remembering with thankful hearts how they had been brought in safety to the end of their long and dangerous journey, they were bursting into the word of praise which Gregory had taken for his word of good omen in the Roman market-place—'Alleluia! Alleluia!'

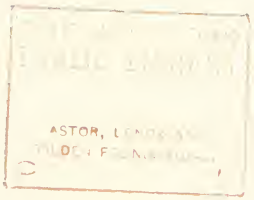
It would take too long to tell all that happened to St. Augustine and his monks. We must hurry on to the history of the Cathedral; so I will only tell you that he preached constantly in the little Church of St. Martin, and that the King must sometimes have gone with his wife to listen to him,

for in a year we find that he became a Christian, and was baptized by St. Augustine. Indeed, some people tell us that the very font that was used at the ceremony is standing in St. Martin's to-day.

Now, King Ethelbert did not do things by halves, and when he was converted he must have thrown all his influence on the side of the missionaries, for great numbers of his subjects were baptized also, and in no very long time we hear of him helping his nephew, the King of the East Saxons, to build a Cathedral in London, and found a Bishopric there.

He also handed over his Palace in Canterbury to St. Augustine and his friend, telling them that they could turn it into a monastery, while he and Queen Bertha retired to Reculver, which stands near the coast some miles distant, where he built another royal residence.

This, then, was the beginning of the great Cathedral which stands in the middle of the little city of Canterbury. For Augustine founded not only a monastery, but a church, which was known as 'Christ Church,' and, as has always happened in the building of our Minsters, this original church was burned, rebuilt, and improved; added to,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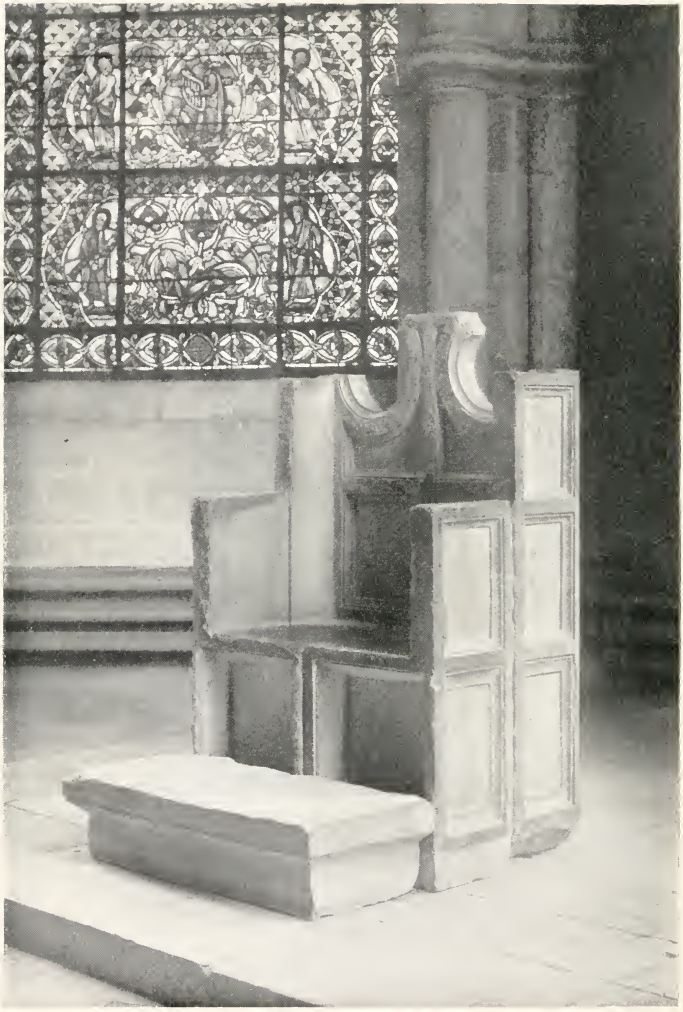

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CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHAIR

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burned again, then rebuilt, until it has grown into the magnificent structure which we see before us to-day.

As was natural, the Roman missionary always looked to his friend, Pope Gregory, for help and advice in all his difficulties, and this is how the English Church came to be under the yoke of Rome for so many long years.

This yoke grew to be so heavy that it could not be borne, and it was thrown off at the Reformation; but just at first we can easily understand the comfort it would be to Augustine to send letters to Gregory, telling him all his troubles, and asking him what he should do, and what rules he should lay down for the guidance of the Christian congregations which were beginning to be formed all over the country.

And Gregory sent back very wise and comforting answers—we can read some of his letters still—telling Augustine to go to Gaul, and there be ordained Archbishop of England by the Frankish Bishops; then, with their help, to ordain some of his most trusted monks to be Bishops under him, whom he could appoint to rule over different parts of England.

Now, the Royal Palace at Canterbury, which the King had given to Augustine, covered a good deal of space; for, besides the actual dwelling-house, there were gardens and pleasure-grounds round about it, and we know that in those pleasure-grounds stood a ruined Roman temple. And, like a wise man, St. Augustine made the most of the present he had received.

Not content with founding Christ Church on one side of the piece of ground, he founded another church, the Church of St. Pancras, on the other side, just where the Roman temple stood, and between them, perhaps using the Palace itself as part of the buildings, he founded a monastery, which he dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul.

But this name did not continue long, for before the monastery was completed the great missionary Archbishop had died, and although at first he was buried in the grounds ('by the road-side,' we are told), when the building was completed his body was taken up and laid to rest within its walls, and from that time it was known as the Monastery of St. Augustine.

Now that we have learned the story of the beginning of Canterbury Cathedral, let us approach

it by the narrow streets of the little city, and look at it as it stands to-day.

It is somewhat difficult to describe, for it is so old and vast, and has been improved and added to so often, that, although the principal part of the edifice is very regular, being built, as is usual, in the form of a cross, with a great square tower, crowned by four little spires in the centre, and two other towers, each with four little spires also, at the west end, there are numberless little offshoots, and towers, and turrets, each bearing its own name and having its own history.

For, long ago, the Archbishops of Canterbury were not only ministers of religion, but Ministers of State as well; and they not only ruled the Church, but they helped the King to rule the State and to make laws, just as the Prime Minister does to-day. So they were very important dignitaries indeed, and held their Courts as if they were Kings, and received all sorts of people, and transacted all manner of business, so that the Archbishop's Palace at Canterbury was almost as important a place as the King's Palace at Westminster.

So when we walk about the Cathedral and its precincts, we are not only treading 'where the

Saints have trod,' but we are treading where proud Kings, and fierce soldiers, and scheming statesmen, have trod as well. some of whom, it seems to us, did not deserve to be named with the Saints at all.

But we dare not pass judgment on them, for they lived in fierce and turbulent times, and their actions cannot be measured by our standards, and each of them did their part, by fair deeds, or by deeds that do not look so fair, in the building up of this great country of ours.

When we enter the enormous church, there is one peculiarity that we notice at once: it rises up from the nave, which is the lowest part of it, by flights of steps to the highest part, which is the high-altar, and the chapel behind it, in which the Shrine of Thomas à Becket once stood.

As you see, the nave is shut off from the choir by a stone screen, which is pierced by three doors, one of which leads into the choir, the other two into the side-aisles and transepts. This screen can only be reached by going up a flight of stone steps, and when we pass through it, and enter what is known as Trinity Chapel, we have once more to ascend a flight of steps, which are called the

'Pilgrims' Steps.' I will tell you the meaning of this curious name later on.

Perhaps the very first thing we want to see in this wonderful church is St. Augustine's chair, which stands in the east end of the building, in a curious little circular chapel known as the 'Corona,' or 'Becket's Crown.' When we look at this great chair, fashioned out of three blocks of Purbeck marble, our thoughts travel back along the centuries, and we seem to see a long chain, every link of which is a man, stretching between St. Augustine on the one hand, and the present Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Davidson, on the other.

For this is the chair in which all the Archbishops of Canterbury are enthroned. Some people are of opinion that it was King Ethelbert's throne, and that he gave it to St. Augustine to be his 'Bishop's Stool.' Others think that it was not placed here until some centuries later; but whether St. Augustine sat in it or not, we know that it is very, very old, and we look at it with awe as we think of the long line of men, some of whose names are almost forgotten now, who have come, one after the other, all down the ages to take their seats upon it, thus

signifying to all the world that they were entering into St. Augustine's office, and assuming the great and solemn responsibilities which that office implies. Let us think of the stories of a few of these men on whom so much responsibility rested.

When we look at the long roll of Archbishops, the first name of note after St. Augustine is Theodore. Do you know where he came from? He was sent from Rome, but he was really a Greek, and he had been born and brought up in the city of Tarsus, the birthplace of St. Paul. Perhaps the school-boys who read this book will not love this Theodore of Tarsus, for he it was who introduced the teaching of Greek into England. He founded a school at Canterbury, and had the pupils taught his own tongue. He also divided the country into dioceses, and placed a Bishop over each, teaching these Bishops to look to the Archbishop of Canterbury as their head; and, little as we may think it, this was a great work for England.

For before Theodore's time each Bishop had settled down under the protection of a King, and so had simply been the chief minister of that Kingdom.

Thus, the Archbishop of Canterbury had been

the Bishop of the Kingdom of Kent; the Bishop of London, the Bishop of the East Saxons; the Bishop of Lichfield, the Bishop of Mercia; and so on.

But when Archbishop Theodore created new dioceses, which were not measured by the boundaries of the various small Kingdoms, and when the Bishops of these dioceses learned to look to Canterbury for orders and advice, rather than to their own petty Kings, then an object-lesson was given, and the first step was taken towards the breaking up of those smaller Kingdoms, and having one King to rule over all the land.

That was the piece of work which Theodore did for the good of the Church, and the building up of the English nation.

Then there was an Archbishop named Cuthbert, who caused the Creed and the Lord's Prayer to be taught to the people in their own tongue, and not in Latin, which they could not understand.

He wrought this work for the Church at large; but there was another work which he wrought for his own Cathedral Church at Canterbury, which is very amusing, and shows that he must have had a keen sense of humour. In those old days a church was apt to grow famous not so much for the piety

of the people who worshipped there, as for the number of holy men who chanced to be buried within its walls. We can see examples of this in the way in which every church of note had its shrine containing the body of its particular Saint.

Now we know that St. Augustine was buried in his monastery, and not in his Cathedral Church, and the Archbishops who succeeded him followed his example, and gave orders that they were to be buried in the monastery also; and so it came about that there were no great men buried in the church at all, and strangers who came to Canterbury passed the Cathedral by, and flocked to the monastery to pray beside St. Augustine's grave.

'This will never do,' said Archbishop Cuthbert to himself, and he quietly wrote to the Pope, and to the King of Kent, asking that, when his time came to die, he might be laid to rest in the Cathedral.

His request was granted, but he said not a word to anyone. He kept the letters, and bided his time, for he knew that if the monks of St. Augustine's came to know of the slight he was about to cast on their monastery, they would try to thwart his design.

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CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL : THE TRANSEPT OF MARTYRDOM

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At last the day came that he lay a-dying, and his friends gathered round his bed with tearful faces.

But the Archbishop was not tearful; he was not afraid to die, and he was glad to think that, after his death, he would be able to render a service to the church of which he was so proud.

So he drew out the letters he had received from King and Pope, and showed them to his astonished friends, and told them where he desired to be buried; then, with a touch of humour, which makes us feel that he must have been a very shrewd and human old man, he added: '*Bury me first. Toll the bell afterwards.*'

So his friends buried him hurriedly and in secret, then, after they had filled in his grave, and built up the stones again, they tolled the great bell mournfully, to let all Canterbury know that the Archbishop had passed away.

When the Abbot and monks of the monastery came to claim, as was their wont, the body of the Primate, they were told, to their wrathful astonishment, that he was already buried, and they were shown the letters, and taken to see his grave, which, of course, they could not disturb. After

this all the Archbishops were buried in the Cathedral, and, as we shall see later on, there was one of them who, if he were not a great Saint, at least was so famous that, after his death, his shrine became a place of pilgrimage, not only for English people, but for people from all over Europe.

Then there were Archbishop Dunstan and Archbishop Alphege—St. Dunstan and St. Alphege, as they came to be called—who were buried on either side of the high-altar. They had magnificent shrines, no trace of which remains to-day, save a piece of carved stone, which formed part of St. Dunstan's shrine.

And yet these men, whose names seem so vague to us, were great and noble figures in their time.

St. Dunstan helped to mould the destinies of England; St. Alphege died for his faith, and, like St. Alban at Verulam, helped to swell the English ranks of the 'noble army of martyrs.'

St. Dunstan was a little fair-haired, delicate, Somersetshire boy, who was born at Glastonbury, where a famous Abbey stood.

His father, Heorstan, was a rich thane, who owned lands and vassals, and in the winter evenings, when these vassals were gathered

together in the great hall round the blazing fire, they sang songs and told stories to one another; and little Dunstan listened to them, and grew so fond of the old songs and stories that he never forgot them all his life long.

He was passionately fond of music, and persuaded an old harper to teach him to play on the harp; and when he grew older, and travelled about, visiting first at one nobleman's house, then at another, as befitted a young man of his rank, he always carried his harp with him, and charmed the fair ladies whom he met with the beautiful music he could draw from its strings.

He was very fond of reading, too, and there were plenty of books in the Abbey of Glastonbury for him to pore over; and in time he became known as one of the most learned and cultured youths of his day.

Then he went to Court, and would doubtless have become a great courtier, and perhaps might have idled away his time playing on his harp, and talking about literature to the Queen and her ladies, if it had not been for the unkindness of some of the Nobles whom he met there.

They were jealous of him, of his good looks and

sunny nature, and his skill in music and learning. So one day, when he was out riding in a marshy part of the country, they set on him, pulled him off his horse, threw him into the marsh, trampled him underfoot, and left him for dead.

He was not dead, however, but he was so badly hurt that he had a long illness afterwards, and during the days and weeks when he was lying helpless he had time to think about many things—about his life, and what use he could make of it. And by the time he had recovered he had made up his mind that, instead of being a courtier, he would be a monk.

I cannot tell you all that happened during his long life. He first became Abbot of Glastonbury, then Bishop of Worcester, and then Archbishop of Canterbury.

Now, as I have already told you, in those days the Archbishops of Canterbury were practically Prime Ministers of England as well, and Dunstan was both a good Archbishop and a wise Prime Minister.

In his time the Danes had conquered a large part of the country, and had settled down to live there. But instead of conducting themselves like

peaceable citizens, they behaved like thieves and robbers, and naturally the English people feared and hated them, and were constantly at war with them, trying to drive them out of the country.

The wise Archbishop knew that they would never be able to do this, so he tried to make the Danes take an interest in the land, and learn to look on it as their home, by giving them good laws, and treating them firmly but justly.

And, in his time at least, the plan succeeded.

He also encouraged foreigners from France and Germany to come and trade with England, and it was in his days that London first began to grow into a great city. He made laws about the coinage of our money, and saw that just weights and measures were used by traders, so that poor people should not be oppressed and wronged.

After Archbishop Dunstan came Archbishop Alphege, the martyr. I told you that St. Dunstan had treated the Danes very kindly and wisely, but after his death the King, Ethelred, who was a very foolish young man, and had never taken the Archbishop's advice about anything, determined to make one great effort to rid the country of them by putting them all to death.

So he gave orders that, on a certain night, the Saxons were to kill all the Danes who were living (many of them quite peaceably) in their midst. This was done, but, as you may think, dire vengeance followed the treacherous act.

As soon as the news of the massacre reached Sweyn, King of Denmark, he at once swore a great oath that he would never rest until he had conquered England and avenged his murdered people. Accordingly he gathered together an immense force of Norsemen and Danes, and descended on the shores of England, and for four long years they harried the country, burning towns and homesteads wherever they went.

When it was known that they were approaching Canterbury, the Archbishop was advised to fly for his life as long as there was time.

But to the brave old man such an act would have been a betrayal of the trust committed to him by God.

'God forbid that I should tarnish my character by such an inglorious deed,' he exclaimed, 'and be afraid to go to Heaven because a violent death might lead me there!'

So he remained at his post, a true priest of God

to the end, and passed triumphantly to his reward through the 'violent death' which he had looked forward to so calmly

When the Cathedral was attacked, he and his monks locked themselves in the great church, hoping that its walls would be strong enough to protect them. And they might have been, had the Danes not used their most deadly weapon—fire.

As an old writer tells us: 'They brought barrels, and piled them together, and set them alight; then they threw them on the roof, and their heat melted the lead with which it was covered, so that it ran down like rain on the poor men inside, who were like to be roasted alive.'

Then the brave Archbishop, gathering his monks round him, flung open the door, and begged mercy for his little flock of the wild heathen warriors, offering willingly to become a prisoner himself if they were allowed to go free.

It was in vain. All the monks except four, who managed to escape, were at once put to death, and Alphege was led away a prisoner—not that the Danes wanted to spare him, but they hoped that the Saxon King might offer to pay a ransom for him.

But poor cowardly Ethelred thought only of his

own safety, and fled over the sea to Normandy, so no ransom came from him.

The country people, who loved their good Archbishops, did their utmost to gather enough money together to rescue him; but he heard this, and sent messages to them, telling them to desist, 'for, as he said, 'there is enough misery in the country without people being made poorer for my sake.'

So the Danes became tired of waiting for money, and after seven weeks they led Alphege out to die in their 'husting,' or public meeting-place, at Greenwich.

And, to make their cruelty more cruel, the savage sea-rovers determined that his death should give them a little amusement. So they placed him in the centre, and stood round in a ring, and pelted him with stones, and with the sharp horns of oxen, just as, a thousand years before, men had stoned St. Stephen outside the gates of Jerusalem.

It is terrible to read of such things being done in this peaceful England of ours, is it not? And we feel thankful to the unknown Dane who, more merciful than the rest of his countrymen, struck the Archbishop on the head with his axe, and so put an end to his sufferings.

After he was dead, his mangled body was buried at Greenwich, and the sad story seemed to be at an end.

But now comes in one of those incidents which make these old Cathedrals we are learning about so full of interest, and such wonderful links with the past.

For King Sweyn of Denmark died just when he had succeeded in conquering England, and Canute, or Cnüt, his son, reigned in his stead. This Canute was a wonderful man, one of the most wonderful men in history. From a heathen and a barbarian he turned into a Christian and a wise King. In his time the English people had peace; and, by the justice and wisdom of his rule, he taught them to forget that he was an alien and a foreigner.

Among his other good qualities, he had a great care for God's house and God's ministers, and when it was told him how, sixteen years before, his father's followers had murdered the Archbishop of Canterbury, he immediately set to work to make what reparation lay in his power. He had St. Alphege's poor crushed bones taken from their humble grave at Greenwich and brought back in solemn state, and with all the marks of honour he

could render, to his Cathedral Church, which, in the years that had passed since his death, had been rebuilt and restored.

And after the bones had been laid to rest beside the altar, the great and powerful monarch, whom everyone looked up to, and feared, lifted the golden crown from his head, and handed it to the clergy, asking them to hang it up at the head of the great cross which hung in the nave, as a token that he was sorry for, and would fain have undone, the cruel deed of his countrymen.

Soon after Alphege came two foreign Archbishops, Lanfranc and Anselm, whose names will live in history. Although they were friends and fellow-countrymen—both of them being Italians—and although they came to Canterbury from the same little Norman monastery, they were very different in character.

The story of the little monastery itself would interest you, had I time to tell you about it—how it was called the Monastery of Bec because it stood down in a wooded valley beside a little 'beck' or stream; how the first Abbot, Herluin, was a soldier before he turned a monk; how he was so poor that he had to build his first tiny house

with his own hands; and how he was making an oven when Lanfranc found him out, and asked if he might join him.

But we must pass over all that, and go on to the time when Herluin was dead, and Lanfranc was Abbot in his stead.

Now Lanfranc, as well as being good and learned, was what we call a 'practical man'; that is, when there was anything to be done, he not only saw the very best way to do it, but he could do it himself if need be, or direct other men to do it.

And the Norman Duke William, when he conquered England, needed such men to help him to arrange matters in his new Kingdom, so he sent for him, and made him Archbishop of Canterbury.

There is a very pretty story told of how William and Lanfranc first came to be such friends. At the time when the Duke got into trouble with the Pope because he had married his cousin Matilda, Lanfranc was Abbot of Bec, and, not being afraid of anyone—not even of William himself—he sided with the Pope, and made no secret that he did so.

William was so angry when he heard this that he ordered Lanfranc to leave Normandy at once.

The fearless Abbot obeyed, and set out from his monastery on the only horse he possessed, which was very lame, and went hirpling along on three legs.

Of course he did not get on very quickly, and William, who was foaming with rage, and who had ridden to Bec himself to see if the Abbot had obeyed his orders, overtook him in a narrow lane.

Can you picture the scene to yourselves? The angry Duke on his great charger, and the humble monk, with all his worldly belongings strapped on his back, jogging along on his poor lame jennet.

'Thou should'st obey my orders better, and make more haste to get out of the country,' said William haughtily.

'Give me a better horse, and I will go the quicker,' said the Abbot good-humouredly, with a twinkle in his eye.

It was the 'soft answer that turns away wrath, for William was so amused that he burst out laughing, and ever afterwards the two men were the best of friends; and William took Lanfranc's advice in everything.

Indeed, Lanfranc was almost as great a man in England as the Conqueror himself, and, to his

credit be it said, he used his immense power wisely and well.

Like St. Dunstan, he was more of a statesman than a priest, yet he found time, in the midst of his law-making, to attend to his Cathedral, which had been allowed to fall into such a state of dilapidation that it was almost a ruin. He pulled down what remained of it and built it again, and we can still see some of his work in the crypt.

By-and-by the Norman King died—flung from his horse, if you remember, at Mantes, in France—and his friend, the Norman Archbishop, only lived long enough to place his crown on the head of his son, William Rufus, or William the Red. Then he died also, and the Archbishop's throne at Canterbury was empty.

Now, Red William was a very different man from his father. The Conqueror had been stern and ruthless, but he had ever cared for the Church, and for good men. As someone has said of him, 'he was stark to rebel and baron, but he was mild to those who loved God.'

Red William neither feared God himself, nor honoured those who did. So, instead of appointing a new Archbishop to fill Lanfranc's place, he left

the throne of Canterbury empty, and put the money that belonged to it into his own coffers.

It was very wrong, and very wicked ; but it did not trouble him at all, until one day he was seized with illness, and was like to die.

Then he was frightened—I am afraid we cannot say he repented ; but he was frightened—and his thoughts turned to the man who was Abbot of Bec in Lanfranc's place.

The name of this man was Anselm, and he was the most gentle, loving, and saintly Abbot you can imagine. He was so kind, and humble, and altogether good, that his fame had spread not only through Normandy, but also through England.

It chanced that at this particular time he was on a visit to England, and the sick King sent for him, and, much against his will, forced him to become Archbishop.

Anselm did not in the least want to be Archbishop. He was a great student, and he would much have preferred to live on quietly at Bec ; but when the post was forced upon him he did not shrink from the responsibility, but stood up bravely for what was right.

And because of this he had a very troubled life,

for, after all, the Red King recovered, and when he recovered he broke all the promises which he had made on his sick-bed, and persecuted poor Archbishop Anselm because he would not do what he wished him to do, driving him out of the country, and heaping all manner of insults and abuse on him, until I think the sweet-tempered old man must have been almost broken-hearted.

But he never agreed to do what he thought was wrong, and yet he never grew bitter and discourteous, but was always meek and gentle and forgiving, and at last, after Rufus was dead, and his son Henry had recalled him to England, he died peacefully at Canterbury, and was buried beside his friend Lanfranc, in the nave of the Cathedral. Lanfranc's tomb has disappeared, but if we go into this little chapel far up in the choir, we can see where Anselm's remains now rest.

As we stand beside his grave, shall I tell you a few stories about him? They are worth telling, for they show us what kind of man he was, and I think, when you have heard them, you will agree with me that of all the great men who have sat in St. Augustine's chair, and whose bodies have been

laid to rest here, there is no one who deserved the name of Saint more than he did.

As I said before, he was an Italian, and he was born in Aosta, not so very far from the birthplace of St. Hugh of Lincoln. It is a very beautiful country, where rich valleys run up among the snow-tipped Alps, and when little Anselm was picking bright spring flowers in the meadows, or playing in autumn in the harvest-fields, he could look up at these great snow mountains, whose summits seemed to touch the clouds.

There is one story told of him when he was a child which reminds us somewhat of the story that is told of St. Cuthbert when he was a shepherd-lad among the hills by the Tweed.

Anselm's father was a violent and passionate man, but his mother was a gentle, good woman, who used to take her little boy on her knee and tell him about the great God who lived up in Heaven, and from His throne directed all the things on earth.

And little Anselm, who was a thoughtful child, used to ponder these things, and when, in the mornings and evenings, he saw the rays of the rising and setting sun light up the tops of the

CANTERBURY PILGRIMS ON THEIR WAY TO THE SHRINE OF ST. THOMAS À BECKET

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mountains, turning them to rosy pink and burning gold, he made up his mind that Heaven was up there among the snow-peaks, and that God's Palace was just where the light was strongest.

And he thought so much about this that one night he dreamt a dream. He dreamt that a call came to him to go up the mountains to the Palace of the great King. So he rose from his bed, and set out.

And it seemed to him that, before he reached the mountains, he had to pass through yellow harvest-fields, full of ripening grain. There were a great many maidens there reaping, but, instead of working hard, they were idling their time away, talking and laughing to each other.

And all at once Anselm seemed to see that these were not ordinary peasant-maidens, but that they were servants of the great King, who lived in the Palace on the mountain-tops; and he made up his mind that, when he got up there, he would tell God how idle they all were.

Thinking thus, he went on his way, up and up, until at last he reached the heavenly Palace. And there, to his astonishment, he found only the great King and His chief butler; for all the other servants had been sent into the valley to reap.

And as he stood and looked in through the door, the Lord called to him, and told him to sit down at His feet, and asked him his name, and where he came from, and what he wanted.

And the lad answered all His questions as truthfully as he could, only I think that he forgot to tell about the idle girls in the cornfields, for he would begin to see that he too was a little servant of the King, and that he had not always worked as diligently as he might have done.

Then the Lord ordered His butler to go and bring some food to the weary little lad, and the man brought the whitest bread that Anselm had ever seen; and he ate it, and all his weariness vanished. Then he awoke, and lo and behold! he was in his little trundle-bed at home.

It is a quaint and fanciful story, is it not? Yet it influenced the whole of the great Archbishop's life.

For he really believed that he had been in Heaven, and that God had fed him, and ever afterwards he realized, what is so hard for most of us to realize, that Heaven is quite close to earth, not somewhere very far away, and that, if we will, we can do our work here on earth, as the girls in

the harvest-field might have done, with our eyes fixed on the glories of the King's Palace.

And this taught him not to draw a line, as we all are so apt to do, between what we might call his 'everyday work' and his 'Sunday work.' To him one seemed just as sacred as the other.

Because he was a monk, and Abbot of Bec, he had to be a great deal in church, and say a great many prayers, and study the Bible; but he found time to do common things as well.

He was always ready to sympathize with anyone in trouble, and to give them advice, or to go into the class-room in the monastery and listen to the teaching there. And he would take notice of the dull boys, and try to show their masters how to make their lessons interesting, so that they would learn them more easily.

And at night, when all the rest of the monks were asleep, he would go softly into the infirmary, if there was any monk lying sick there, and sit beside him, and shake up his pillows; and if he were very ill, as one poor man once was, he used to peel grapes, and squeeze the juice between his hot lips, to try and moisten his poor parched tongue.

He loved all animals. Once, after he became

Archbishop of Canterbury, he was out riding near Windsor with his attendants. As they rode through the forest they startled a hare, and immediately the young men and their dogs gave chase. There was no chance of escape for the poor frightened little creature, and at last it came and crouched down, stupefied with terror, under Anselm's horse. Everyone crowded round, laughing thoughtlessly at the easy way in which it had been captured; but the tears came into the Archbishop's eyes at the sight of its distress, and he ordered all the dogs to be called off, and allowed it to escape.

But, although he was kind and gentle, he was no coward. As we read before, William Rufus behaved very badly to him, because he would not obey him in matters where he thought the King was wrong. This made Rufus very angry; but Anselm did not mind. He spoke out boldly, and let the Monarch do his worst.

Once William summoned a great Council of Bishops and Barons, to decide what should be done with this old man who cared more for God's smile than for royal favours.

I am afraid some of the other Bishops were

cowards, who wanted to please the King; so they did not defend Anselm as they ought to have done, but turned against him, because they saw he was likely to get into trouble, and be driven out of England.

The Council was a noisy one. Some of the members said one thing, and some another; and they all became very excited, while the King grew more and more angry.

And what do you think Anselm did, to whom it meant so much? Do you think he sat listening, and trembling, and begging his brother Bishops to come to his help? Not a bit of it. He made his defence in quiet, dignified words; then, seeing that everyone was so angry that they could not decide what to do with him, he rose quietly, and walked out of the hall, telling them that when they had made up their minds they could come and tell him.

Then he went into the church, and said his prayers, and sat quietly down to wait; and when, at last, the Bishops came to look for him, they found him 'leaning his head against the wall, having fallen into calm sleep.'

It was no wonder that such a man was not afraid

of the anger of Kings, and that, at last, even his enemies came to admire his peaceful, holy life.

II

And now we come to the most famous Archbishop of all—Thomas à Becket, known as St. Thomas of Canterbury.

Somehow we do not think of him as a Saint in the same way as we think of St. Cuthbert of Durham, or St. Hugh of York, or St. Anselm, who were content to eat poor fare, and live in rough lodgings, and face hardships, and go weary journeys, for the sake of Christ and His Gospel.

But, all the same, Thomas à Becket had a courage of his own. Although he was haughty and headstrong, he lost his life rather than yield to the King in a matter where he thought he was right; and we cannot help honouring anyone who is ready to die rather than be untrue to his convictions.

This is the story of Thomas's life. After William the Norman conquered England, large numbers of his countrymen flocked across the Channel. Among them was a silk-mercer of Rouen called Gilbert à Becket. He settled in

London, and set up a little shop in Cheapside, and he seems to have prospered greatly. For in course of time we find he became Portreve of the City, which was something like being Lord Mayor. He also built a chapel in St. Paul's Churchyard, which shows that he was a wealthy man.

He had one little son named Thomas, and a gentle, pious wife, who was very kind to the poor, and who was in the habit, when her little boy's birthday came round, of weighing him in a pair of scales against a pile of money, clothes, and provisions, which she afterwards carried with her own hands to destitute folk who needed them.

The boy was brought up in luxury, as befitted his father's wealth and position, and had for his friends all the young Norman Nobles and Barons.

He went to Oxford, then to the University of Paris, and when his education was finished he was one of the gayest and most fashionable young men in London.

He was very daring, and very witty, and there was much that was noble about him. For he was ever true to his friends, true to his word, true even to his favourite animals.

One day he was riding out with a party of his

companions on a hawking expedition, when his hawk, tired with the chase, fell into a mill-lade, and, too exhausted to rise from the water, was in danger of being carried by the current under the mill-wheel.

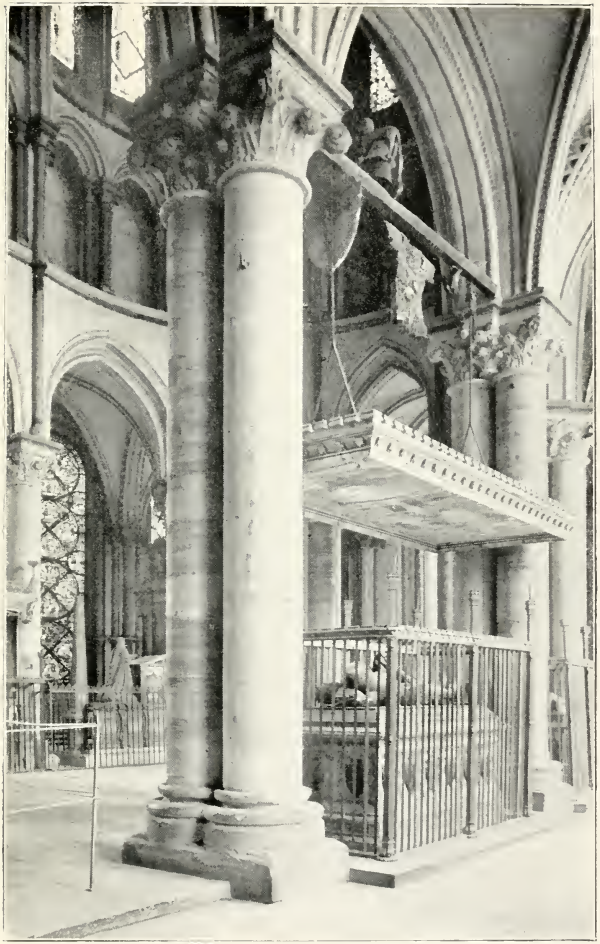
To everyone's astonishment, her master, seeing her danger, flung himself from his horse and plunged into the water, and, at grave peril to his own life, rescued her.

It was a brave deed, and we feel that we should have loved the young gallant who took so much trouble for the sake of a poor tired bird.

At last something happened which must have seemed very hard at the time to the handsome young man, although he did not regret it in after-years.

His father, the rich merchant, lost nearly all his money, and his son had to look about for something to do, instead of merely amusing himself, as he had hitherto done. He was clever and well educated, and he determined to become a priest, thinking, no doubt, that, with his abilities, he would soon obtain a comfortable appointment.

Now it chanced that at this time the country had fallen into a great state of misery and con-



CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: TOMB OF THE BLACK PRINCE

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fusion. King Stephen had been chosen King in place of his cousin Matilda ; and although he had been forced to sign the Great Charter, he had not held to the promises made in it, but governed the country so badly that bloodshed and crime and lawlessness prevailed everywhere.

Things were in such a state that it seemed almost hopeless to dream of better times, and, had it not been for the strength and prudence of one man, these better times might not have come.

That man's name was Theobald, one of the Archbishops of Canterbury. He determined to invite Matilda's son Henry, who was Count of Normandy and Anjou, to come to England, hoping that the English people would take him to rule over them when Stephen died, and that he would prove a better King than Stephen had been.

He wanted someone to help him to carry out his plans, however, and the brilliant young scholar-priest, who was of Norman birth himself, and who was on friendly terms with all the English Nobles, seemed the very man to aid him.

So Thomas à Becket came to Canterbury, to be the friend and confidant of the Archbishop.

I expect that he was delighted, as any young

man would have been, when he got the appointment, thinking that his fortune was made.

I wonder what he would have thought, as he rode down the leafy Kentish lanes to his new home, if he could have read the future, and seen how the remainder of his brilliant, stormy life was to be connected with it ; how he was to be enthroned as Archbishop, and die a violent death there, and there also be laid to his long rest.

At present, however, everything looked bright. Becket was sent over the sea to invite the Count of Anjou to come to England. Henry came, and was accepted by the English people as heir to the Crown. Soon afterwards Stephen died, and he succeeded to the throne, and it was only natural that he should show great favour to the young priest who had taken such a part in placing him upon it.

So Becket was made Chancellor of England, and, as he was about the same age as the new King, the two young men became great friends. They rode and hunted together, and sometimes played jokes with each other, just like two schoolboys.

When the King had a war with France, Becket

fought for him at the head of seven hundred Knights. In fact, the youthful Chancellor was much more of a soldier and a courtier than a priest.

But once again a great change was coming in his life. Archbishop Theobald died, and, to everyone's astonishment, especially to the astonishment of Becket himself, Henry insisted that he should succeed him.

The truth was that Henry had made up his mind to lessen the power of the Church; in other words, he wanted to have the right to rule the affairs of the Church as he ruled the affairs of the nation, and he thought that if Becket, being his bosom friend, became Archbishop, he would help him to do this.

But he did not know the man with whom he had to deal! He had very little respect himself for the Church, or for religion, and, misled by his Chancellor's gay dress and reckless manners, he thought that he had the same.

But although up till now Becket had been more of a soldier than a priest, down at the bottom of his heart he had a strict sense of right and wrong, and he knew that if he were to be a worthy Archbishop, his life must be different to what it had been.

He was quite content with his office of Chancellor, however, so he tried to persuade Henry to appoint someone else to the Primacy. 'A fine figure you are choosing to lead your monks at Canterbury,' he exclaimed, when the King spoke to him on the subject, pointing to the rich garments which he wore.

When Henry insisted, he spoke more gravely. 'You will soon hate me as much as you love me now,' he said, 'for you assume an authority in the affairs of the Church to which I shall never assent.'

But Henry was determined to have his own way. He did not dream that any man would dare to oppose him. And Becket became Archbishop. Then came trouble—trouble that lasted till the end.

Henry demanded more power in the management of ecclesiastical affairs; Becket refused to grant it.

It is a sad story—a story of a broken friendship, and hasty words, whose consequences could never be recalled.

We cannot help admiring Becket, although, perhaps, he was too unbending—too ready to stand on his rights. As soon as he was made Archbishop he changed the whole manner of his life. He had been gay, and heedless, and luxurious before; now

he was grave, and self-controlled, and lived much more plainly.

He had told the King before his appointment that he did not intend to yield to his demands, and he held to his decision, although everyone, even the Pope, urged him to give way a little.

At last the quarrel became so great that his life was in danger, and he had to fly, disguised, from the country.

He was absent for six years, but never once did he think of yielding, although it became plain to everyone that, by holding to his own opinions in the way he did, he was really putting himself in the wrong.

At last Henry paid a visit to Normandy, and met his old friend, now his enemy, at a place called Tréteval.

After some argument he agreed to 'let bygones be bygones,' and to allow Becket to return to England. But the reconciliation cannot have been very complete, for no sooner had the Archbishop departed than Henry exclaimed impatiently, 'Will no man rid me of this turbulent priest?'

Alas! these were like other angry words, spoken in haste without any thought of their consequences,

and the King repented of them all his life afterwards.

For there were four of his Knights standing by when he uttered them — Fitzurse, Moreville, De Tracy, and Le Bret—who took them for permission to murder Becket, and without further ado they determined to follow him to England. Meanwhile the Archbishop had reached Canterbury in safety, and had been greeted by a joyous welcome from the people of Kent, who had ever loved him dearly, and had once more taken up his abode in the Palace.

Now let us go into the tiny north-west transept which opens from the north aisle—the 'Chapel of the Martyrdom,' as it has come to be called, for it was here that the terrible deed took place that filled, not only England, but Europe, with horror.

We will not remain in it at present, but go through this low door at the opposite side, and then we shall find ourselves in the cloisters.

You all know what cloisters are? The long vaulted stone corridors or arcades, where the monks used to spend most of their time, when they were not in their cells or in church, reading, writing, or talking.

These cloisters almost always formed four sides of a square, the centre of which was open to the sky, and carpeted with smooth green turf. On one side the cloister walls were pierced by arched windows, which, however, were not filled with glass, so that they were really almost like stone verandas. So the monks had plenty of fresh air. Indeed, they sometimes had too much, for we read of a monk at Canterbury writing to a friend in France and telling him that he would have to give up writing entirely until the spring, as his fingers were so stiff and swollen with the cold that he could no longer hold the pen.

In many places these cloisters, with their beautiful carving, have been destroyed, but here at Canterbury they are perfect, and we can walk round them and look at the smooth, green square of turf which they enclose, which is now used as a burying-place.

Well, if we stand at the corner of these cloisters, just where the door leads into them from the Chapel of the Martyrdom, and look across, in a slanting direction, to the opposite corner, we will see where the Bishop's Palace stood in the time of Becket. It was connected with that corner of the

cloisters, just as the Cathedral is joined to this corner.

About five o'clock on a dark December evening, just four days after Christmas, Becket was seated in his chamber in the Palace, talking to his friends, while, in the dimly-lit church, the monks were singing Vespers. Suddenly the seneschal appeared, and announced that four Knights had come from France, from the King, bearing a message to the Archbishop.

Becket must have known that their coming meant no good to him, but he showed no sign of fear, and ordered them to be brought into his presence.

The seneschal ushered them in, and at once they began to insult and upbraid the Prelate, and he, on his side, answered them sharply and proudly.

They demanded, in the King's name, that he should return to France. He replied that nothing would induce him to do so. So the storm of words went on, and at last the four Knights rushed impatiently out, calling on their followers to arm, and to close the doors of the Palace, so that none of the townspeople could enter.

They had determined to kill the Archbishop, and

they knew that if any of the citizens of Canterbury got the least idea of what they were about to do, they would crowd in and rescue him.

Meanwhile Becket's handful of faithful friends entreated him to seek safety in the Cathedral ; for in those days people had such reverence for churches that it seemed to them impossible that anyone could be wicked enough to commit an act of violence there.

Becket did not want to go. He believed that he was in the right, and he did not want to appear as if he were afraid.

But his friends were so impressed with the danger he was in that they took hold of his cassock and half pushed, half pulled him along the cloisters, one of his clerks, whose name was Henry of Auxerre, going before him, bearing aloft the staff with a cross on the end of it which was always carried before the Primate.

Can you picture the sad, disorderly little procession, the cross-bearer in front, the group of terrified clergy behind, forcing along their unwilling master—the only man who was not afraid ?

As they reach this low door, which leads to the Cathedral, the sound of hurrying footsteps is heard.

The four Knights have armed themselves, and are running round the other side of the cloisters, trying to catch the Archbishop before he can enter the church.

But they are too late. Becket's friends have got him safely inside the little transept, and are turning round to bar the door behind them.

But the Archbishop would not have it so, and we cannot help admiring his splendid bravery. God's House was meant to be always open, so that whoever will can enter, and he would not have its doors shut for him.

He had begun to climb the steps into the choir, but when he heard the iron bars being fastened, he turned back and undid them with his own hands. 'Away, ye cowards! I command ye not to shut the door,' he thundered; 'the church must not be made into a castle.'

So the door was left open, and the Knights rushed in; and here, just where this tiny stone at our feet marks the spot, the Archbishop was struck down and killed.

It was a wild and wicked deed, and no sooner was it done than it was repented of. But no repentance could undo it. And what weighed more heavily than anything else on the murderers'

minds was the awful thought that they had killed a priest—one of God's ministers—in the very 'Courts of God's House,' the place of all others where they should have been careful of their actions.

With hushed voices and trembling limbs they stole out of the building into the midst of a fearful thunderstorm, which broke just then in all its fury over the little city, and as they passed in haste along the narrow streets, and, mounting their horses, rode away into the darkness, I think they must have felt like Cain, for they must have known that ever afterwards they would be marked men; for, no matter what the Archbishop's faults had been, the whole of Christendom would regard the deed with shuddering horror, because it had been committed within the walls of a church of God.

Meanwhile, in the Cathedral, the poor monks had fastened the doors and put out the lights, and hidden themselves away in dark corners, too dumbfounded and terrified even to venture near the dead man's body. So here it lay, unheeded, on the stone floor, till far on in the night, when the monks gathered courage, and came out of their hiding-places, and, lifting it reverently, laid it on a beir before the high-altar.

Next morning they buried it hurriedly and by stealth in the crypt, for they had heard a rumour that they would not be allowed to bury it in the Cathedral, where so many other Archbishops rested.

But it only remained in the crypt some fifty years, for the story of that dark night's work soon spread through the length and breadth of the land, and all over Europe, and even to Rome itself; and everybody was so horrified at the thought of an Archbishop being murdered in his own Cathedral that they forgot Becket's faults, and only remembered that he died in defence of what he thought were the rights of the Church, and they spoke of him as a Martyr and a Saint, and insisted that his body should be taken from its grave in the crypt, and placed in a magnificent shrine which stood in this empty space, which we see if we ascend these steps near the high-altar, and, passing behind it, enter Trinity Chapel.

Look how worn and uneven these steps are, almost as if they had been fretted away by running water.

Do you know why they are fretted away like that? Because thousands of men and women, pilgrims from all parts of Europe, from England

and Ireland, Scotland and France, Spain and Italy, once climbed up them on their knees, on their way to visit the Shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury. For no shrine in the world was more famous, and none was richer in ornaments; and it was from these pilgrims that the steps take their name of 'Pilgrims' Steps.'

Have you ever heard of Geoffrey Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales'?

It is an old book, written in curious verse and quaint old-world English, and if you opened it perhaps you would not think it looked very interesting; but it tells you of a company of pilgrims who set out from London one April morning to make a pilgrimage to Becket's shrine at Canterbury.

There were twenty-nine of them, and some of them were rich, and some were poor; some were knights and barons, and some were nuns; one was a learned scholar from Oxford, and one was a poor, unlearned cook. And they all told stories by the way, and they all came into the great Cathedral, and prayed at the shrine, and they slept at a little inn, 'The Chequers of the Hope' (you can see it still at the corner of the lane which leads from the

Cathedral precincts to the High Street), and then they all travelled back to London again.

They were only people in Chaucer's imagination, of course, but to read about them gives us a very good idea of the companies of pilgrims with whom the streets of the little city would be crowded in the Middle Ages.

For three hundred years this state of things went on; and the shrine grew more and more famous, and ever richer and more magnificent, as Kings, and Princes, and nobles came to pray at it, and to leave their offerings of gold, or silver, or jewels.

Then came the beginning of the Reformation, and Henry VIII.'s quarrel with the Pope. In his name orders were given that all the great shrines were to be destroyed, and the gold and jewels with which they were adorned put in the King's Treasury.

So the gorgeous shrine at Canterbury was broken to pieces, and the bones of Becket were either destroyed, or thrown into some unknown grave; for no one knows to-day where they are lying.

Before we leave the story of Becket, and turn to that of the Black Prince, whose tomb we see close

beside the spot where the famous shrine stood, let us go down to the crypt, and look at a stone slab in the floor, which marks the spot where Becket's body was buried for the first fifty years after his death.

It also marks the spot where one of the most extraordinary scenes in English history took place.

We have seen how Becket helped to make Henry II. King of England, and what friends the two young men were at first, before Henry insisted on making Thomas Archbishop. We have seen, too, how Henry's words, spoken in haste in France, were the cause of Becket's death.

Well, no sooner was the Archbishop dead than the King was seized with terrible remorse. It seemed to him that he was just as guilty of the rash deed as if he had struck down the Primate with his own sword. And, to add to his distress, serious troubles began to fall on his Kingdom.

While he was engaged in war with France, the people at home rose in rebellion; the Scots invaded the Northern Counties, and, to make matters worse, a stormy and inclement winter brought the country to the verge of starvation.

The common people, in their ignorance and

superstition, said, as the thunder crashed and the wind roared, that it was 'the blood of St. Thomas crying to God for vengeance'; and the King, almost beside himself with remorse and perplexity, came to the conclusion that the only thing he could do to obtain mercy from God for his distressed country, and forgiveness for his own sin, was to 'do penance' after the custom of the time, and humble himself, before God and man, on the very spot where the Archbishop was buried.

So he hurried home from France, and one rainy July day the people of Canterbury, trembling with awe and wonder, saw their King walk barefoot through the muddy streets, with nothing on but a long woollen shirt (the dress of a penitent pilgrim) and a cloak thrown over it to keep off the rain, attended by a train of Bishops and monks.

Into the Cathedral the strange procession went, up the aisle, and down into the crypt; then, throwing off his cloak, and kneeling at the Archbishop's grave, Henry solemnly confessed his sin, owning that it was his hasty words that had led to the murder, and expressing his deep sorrow for them. After which he allowed each of the Bishops

present to give him five strokes with a rod, and each of the monks (there were eighty of them) to give him three strokes; then, the ordeal being over, he spent the night in the dark crypt alone, leaning, we are told, against one of these stone pillars.

So ended this sad story of broken friendship, and pride, and angry words, and violent death. There were 'faults on both sides,' as we say; and because Becket was the one who suffered most he had the sympathy of the people, and his name was held in honour; but we must not forget that although the way in which the King acknowledged his sin, and tried to make amends for it, seems strange and unnatural to us, yet to him, and to the people of his day, it was the sign of his deep repentance, and he did not shrink from it, as too many of us might have done.

Now let us turn to the story of the Black Prince, which is so much brighter and more hopeful than that of Becket. You know a great deal about this Prince from your history-books; but somehow he seems more real to us when we stand beside his grave at Canterbury, and see the very armour he wore when he rode to battle.

He was the eldest son of King Edward III. and gentle Philippa of Hainault, who, as you may have heard, were married in York Minster.

He spent his school-days at Queen's College, Oxford, and, when he was still a boy, he became a soldier. When he was only sixteen he went with his father to fight in France, and after King Edward had ravaged the whole country to the very gates of Paris, he was retreating with his forces in the direction of Flanders, when the French King, Philip, with an immense army, came up to him and offered instant battle.

The English had encamped near the Forest of Cressy, which gave its name to the fight.

I need not describe the battle to you ; you know about it as well, or better, than I do. How the King did not fight at all, but went up to the top of a windmill which stood on a hill near by, and remained there watching how things went on, leaving the Boy-Prince, in his black armour, to direct the soldiers ; and how, when the lad was in danger, and some of the English nobles, indignant, perhaps, at what seemed to them his father's carelessness, spurred their horses up to the windmill, and called out to the King that his son was in

peril, he answered, 'Let the child win his spurs, and let the day be his.'

You know also how the child *did* win his spurs, and gained the day, helped by the fact that a terrific thunderstorm came on, and the Italian bowmen, who had been fighting for the French, allowed their bowstrings to get so wet that they could not draw them, while the English archers, who were more accustomed to storms, and carried their bows in cases, kept their bowstrings dry, and afterwards used them with deadly effect. No wonder that after that day the English nation worshipped their brave young Prince.

But besides being brave, he was gentle and courteous—a true Knight. Ten years passed away, and once more he was leading an English army, at Poitiers, in France. The odds were terribly against him. He had eight thousand men; King John of France had sixty thousand. But as the English army was surrounded, he must either fight or surrender.

'God is my help,' said the dauntless Prince, when he saw the number of his enemies; 'I must fight them as best I can.' And fight them he did, and conquered them; and the French King fell a prisoner into his hands.

Do you remember how he treated him? He had a banquet prepared for him in his own tent, and stood behind his chair, and waited on him himself; and when the French King would have remonstrated, and said that it was not fitting that he, the vanquished, should be waited on by his conqueror, he pointed out that the French Monarch was a King, while he had not as yet attained that dignity, but was only a subject, and therefore must show reverence to his superiors.

And you remember also that, when they appeared together in the streets of London, and the curious citizens thronged out to meet them, ready to jeer at the unfortunate King who had lost his Kingdom, and to cheer their own Prince, who had gained it, they were rebuked and silenced, and taught a lesson of generosity and courtesy by the sight of the vanquished Monarch riding in the place of honour on a fine white charger, while by his side, dressed in plain clothes, on a little black palfrey, rode the young man who had conquered him.

The King and the Prince had landed at Sandwich, and on their way up to London they had stayed for a night at Canterbury, and had visited the

Shrine of Thomas à Becket. We do not know if the Prince had ever been in the little Kentish town before, but it appears that on this visit he was greatly delighted with the beauty of its Cathedral, and he made up his mind that, when he died, he would be buried there.

Six years after this he fell in love with his cousin Joan, who was so beautiful that she was called 'The Fair Maid of Kent.' But because she was his cousin there was some trouble about his marrying her, and when at last he was allowed to do so he was so glad that he founded, as a thank-offering, a beautiful little chapel, or 'chantry,' down in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral.

Other sixteen years passed, and the Prince lay dying in the Palace of Westminster. We have seen what a brave and courteous gentleman he was, and the way in which he met death shows us that he was a fearless Christian as well.

When he knew that he was dying, he made his will. We can still read it, written in old-world French. In it he commits his soul to God, and directs that his body should be taken to Canterbury, and buried in the chapel that he had founded in the crypt. He also gave orders that his tomb was

to be decorated by his crest—three ostrich-feathers —and his arms, and on them were to be inscribed his mottoes, *Houmont*, and *Ich dien*. Further, that round his tomb an inscription was to be written clearly, so that all men could read it, telling how little the grandeur, and pomp, and success of this life matters when the time comes for a man to die.

He died the day after he had made this will, on Trinity Sunday, 1376. His commands were obeyed, in part at least, for, in the midst of great mourning, his body was taken to Canterbury. But people felt somehow that it was not fitting that this great, and chivalrous, and well-beloved Prince should be buried down in the dark crypt, so they laid him here in Trinity Chapel, close to the Shrine of Becket.

Look, they have placed his effigy above his tomb, so that all coming generations might know what manner of man he was.

There he lies, in full armour, 'his head resting on his helmet, his feet with the likeness of the spurs he won at Cressy; his hands joined in the last prayer he offered up on his death-bed'—the prayer in which he asked forgiveness for himself and his enemies.

Over him hangs a wooden canopy, on which is painted a curious representation of the Holy Trinity; and above all, fastened to the beam from which the canopy is hung, are the things which I think will interest you most of all, and which he himself desired should hang above his tomb.

There is his helmet, and his jointed gauntlets, his shield and surcoat, tarnished and faded now, but once ablaze with the golden leopards of England and the fleur-de-lys of France; and his sword-scabbard, which once contained his sword, which, it is said, was carried away by Oliver Cromwell.

Then, before we turn away, let us bring our eyes down to the tomb once more, and notice the ostrich-feathers carved round it—the 'Prince of Wales' feathers,' which we know so well, for they have been borne as a crest by the heir to the throne of England ever since the days of the Black Prince. Let us also look at the mottoes woven round them: *Houmont* (or *Hoch muth*), 'High spirits,' and *Ich dien*, 'I serve.'

Do they not tell us the secret of the wonderful influence which this Prince, who died so long ago, wielded? He served, but he served nobly, willingly,

with the high and generous spirit and the kindly tact of a good man. I think the service which he rendered to all who were round about him, whether they were his friends, or whether they were his foes, was the service which St. Paul meant when he said, 'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not to men.'

If we tried to look at all the tombs in this grand Cathedral, and to recall the stories of all those who lie buried in them, we might spend days here; and, unluckily, we have not time to do that.

But before we leave it, let us go down to the crypt once more, for, although it is so quiet and solemn, I think the crypt is quite as interesting as the Cathedral above.

You remember how I told you that the Prince had had some trouble over his marriage, and how, when it was safely accomplished, he founded a chapel, or chantry, here as a thank-offering.

We see this chapel on our left-hand side as we enter.

'But,' you say in astonishment, 'it looks as if people worshipped in it to-day. Here is a pulpit, and there are chairs and books.'

Yes, people do worship in it to-day, and that is

one of the glories of Canterbury Cathedral. It is the Mother-Cathedral of England, and in it, for over a thousand years, the stately ritual of the National Church has been carried on. But it was big enough and generous enough to spare a little corner of its crypt as a refuge to a congregation of 'strangers and foreigners' who came to this country when they could not worship God in their own way with safety in their native land.

You have read about the Huguenots, the Protestants of France and Flanders, who were so persecuted in the sixteenth century that they fled abroad for safety.

Many of them went to Switzerland and Germany, and many of them came to England.

They were mostly cloth or silk weavers, and it was a very good thing for England that they did come, for they brought the knowledge of their craft with them, and taught it to English people.

A colony of them settled at Canterbury, and as they could only speak French, and had neither church nor workshops, and as their manner of worship was different from that of the English, Queen Elizabeth said that they could have the crypt of the Cathedral to work in on week-days,

and to have Service in on Sundays. So they set up their looms here, and worked at them until they had earned enough money to take work-rooms elsewhere. And they took possession of the Black Prince's chantry, and used it as their church.

And although they only wove in the crypt for a short time, they worshipped here always, and their descendants worshipped here after them; and even now, every Sunday, a French Service is held, after the manner of the Huguenots, in this little chapel.

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MR.
CROCKETT'S
PREFACE

THE WHY

FOUR CHILDREN WOULD NOT READ SCOTT

So I told them these stories—and others—to lure them to the printed book, much as carrots are dangled before the nose of the reluctant donkey. They are four average intelligent children enough, but they hold severely modern views upon story-books. "Waverley," in especial, they could not away with. They found themselves stuck upon the very threshold.

Now, since the first telling of these Red Cap Tales, the Scott shelf in the library has been taken by storm and escalade. It is permanently gap-toothed all along the line. Also there are nightly skirmishes, even to the laying on of hands, as to who shall sleep with "Waverley" under his pillow.

It struck me that there must be many oldsters in the world who, for the sake of their own youth, would like the various

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[P.T.O.

Sweethearts who now inhabit their nurseries to read Sir Walter with the same breathless eagerness as they used to do—how many years agone? It is chiefly for their sakes that I have added several interludes, telling how Sweetheart, Hugh John, Sir Toady Lion, and Maid Margaret received my petty larcenies from the full chest of the Wizard.

At any rate, Red Cap succeeded in one case—why should he not in another? I claim no merit in the telling of the tales, save that, like medicines well sugar-coated, the patient mistook them for candies—and asked for more.

The books are open. Any one can tell Scott's stories over again in his own way. This is mine.

S. R. Crockett.

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